



Discover Chiropractic

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Can Chiropractors Turn Breech Babies?

If you had any idea how many times chiropractors get asked this question, you'd be shocked. As if chiropractors were obstetricians. The external cephalic version (ECV), a procedure done by obstetricians and some midwives, is a medical procedure that numbs the mother's uterus and manually attempts to turn the fetus from head up to head down while in utero. It is done in a hospital in case something goes wrong and an emergency C-section is warranted.

Completely separate from the medical ECV is the phenomena of reestablishing pelvic balance. This helps to remove tension in pelvic muscles and ligaments and through the restoration of normal biomechanics in the mother, babies optimize their positioning *on their own*.

This is essentially what chiropractic is all about, restoring normal physiological function with gentle spinal adjustments. With no structural or neurological interference, the body has a fascinating ability to correct abnormalities, heal itself, and restore normal function.

Chiropractic and Baby Positioning

When a mother's spine is realigned to proper position, a symphony of physiological responses happens immediately in response to the uninterrupted communication between the central nervous system and the rest of the body. Tension in muscles and ligaments is released and the now balanced pelvis may allow the baby to assume a more optimal position in preparation for birth. More than a dozen articles have been published in the *Journal of Pediatric, Maternal and Family Health* alone that observe and reference this phenomenon in the clinical setting.



The Webster Technique

While chiropractors can't turn breech babies, what they *can* do is gently and specifically adjust a mother's spine and pelvis back into a proper balanced state, reestablishing normal physiological function. In this balanced state, the baby can do what it's designed to do, find the best possible position for itself for birth.

The Webster technique was developed by Larry Webster, D.C., in 1982. This specific chiropractic analysis and adjustment was designed to restore normal body function. It was observed time and time again that when this technique was used on pregnant women who were carrying breech, their babies turned from breech to head down. (Some babies even turned from posterior to anterior.) Once balance in the mother's pelvis was restored by this adjustment to her spine, babies sought out their optimal position for birth.

To most people it seemed like chiropractors were "turning breech babies." After all, before Mom visited the chiropractor, the baby was breech. After Mom visited the chiropractor, the baby wasn't breech anymore. Therefore,

the chiropractor turned the baby, right? Not exactly...

Inside-Out Approach

If chiropractors could turn breech babies, chiropractic would be an “outside-in” approach. Meaning, the doctor would be treating the breech directly. In fact, chiropractic is an “inside-out” approach. Here’s how it’s described by the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association (ICPA):

Chiropractic care benefits all aspects of your body's ability to be healthy. This is accomplished by working with the nervous system—the communication system between your brain and body. Doctors of chiropractic work to correct spinal, pelvic and cranial misalignments. When misaligned, these structures create an imbalance in surrounding muscles and ligaments. Additionally, the resulting nerve system stress may affect the body's ability to function optimally.

The ICPA also states that the Webster technique: *... is a specific assessment and diversified adjustment for all weight bearing individuals and is utilized to enhance neuro-biomechanics in that individual. The ICPA emphasizes that the Webster adjustment is not a treatment for fetal malposition or in-utero constraint. Both breech and in-utero constraint are conditions of the baby, and only obstetric practitioners treat the unborn baby.*



Referring to the Webster technique as a “treatment” for breech presentation creates misunderstanding and unnecessary controversy, and ultimately defies the very principles that chiropractic was founded on.

It is important to recognize that not every chiropractor is thoroughly trained in performing the Webster technique. This is why the ICPA offers extensive postgraduate coursework and awards qualified chiropractors a Certificate of Proficiency in the Webster technique. Only those doctors on the ICPA’s directory maintain recognized certification status for the Webster protocol, as they receive continuing education and updates regarding this technique.